

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF ART



"Matinee Crowd," by Everett Shinn.

In the Albert E. Gallatin Collection. Now on Exhibition in the Studio of Mrs. H. H. Whitney.

TO do much toward bringing about an American comprehension of the merits of Jules Pascin, the satirist, is impossible in this era. The times—or shall I say "we"—are not ready for him. All that one may make is a beginning. A beginning, however modest, shall be made.

This artist, whether by accident or native impulse, is not certain, elects to study that portion of society that all the other classes of society refer to as "vicious." In his drawings individuals are shown living in a state of sin and unrepentant. The American spectator has the conviction that those characters have been studied at close range. Such a procedure it seems shocking. Can an artist who made such drawings be a gentleman? Should artists be acquainted with sin? Or if they do know it well enough to picture it, should they not condemn it like Tolstoy and other decent people?

At once you see an ocean of difficult questions! It is part of my despair that certain of my readers will have stiffened into Bostonian horror already, guessing what is to come. But one must keep cool and imperturbable like Walt Whitman in similar circumstances. When they shall have unstiffened, Jules Pascin will still be there, if anything more wicked, more satiric and more artistic than ever.

Make no mistake. This is no plea for wickedness, but for art, and the correct appreciation of art that breeds art. Stiffness, narrow-mindedness and provincialism are death to imaginative endeavor. If we want art, and we all say we do, we must invite it with our arms opened wide to welcome all the fruits of expression. I can't, however, ask you to grant all the indulgences to artists that Pope Clement bestowed upon Benvenuto Cellini, for the Pope Clement, if Benvenuto is to be believed, winked an amiable eye at even a murder or two. Without going so far as to ask immunity from punishment of any kind for artists, for punishment of some sort is often good for them, it is nevertheless necessary that the artist's receptivity for art should be increased, until sensitiveness to the genuine in art be equal to the sensitiveness to moral law. When this state of development shall have been reached it will be found that the two planes will be upon the same level.

Instances and names are better than argument. Our last little exploit of that sort was the banishment of Maxim Gorky, whose crime was the same as George Eliot's. Before that our two historic examples of non-comprehension were in regard to Poe and Whitman.

In Pascin's case, before we commit ourselves to rashness, let us admit at least that his is a kind of genius that would have appealed to Lafcadio Hearn. Margaret Fuller would not only have been widely interested in Mr. Pascin's types but she would have insisted upon going to see the actual places with the artist, and Nathaniel Hawthorne would have listened avidly to all the details of her adventure when she had returned home, for things lost nothing in Margaret's accounts of them.

Indeed, Arthur Symonds insists that Hawthorne himself was a Pascin, and worse. For Hawthorne was morbidly attracted by sin, he says, and fluttered helplessly around the subject, like a moth around the candle. Pascin, on the other hand, is not morbid. He is simply indifferent to worldly laws and sees sin merely as a spectacle.

How delicious he would have seemed to poor Emily Dickinson! Once before, when writing of Pascin, the poems of Emily Dickinson popped into this writer's head and were quoted to fortify a point. It had seemed years since I had heard mention of this subtle and neglected genius, but on turning the page of *The Sun* that day last autumn there was Emily Dickinson. Under the heading of "Poems Worth Reading" were printed some lines of hers. The apparition of the poem suggested that she had personally reassured me in helping the young foreign genius. It seemed so much more than ever when, to face this week with writing upon this ticklish subject, I found in this

month's *Atlantic* a selection from her letters and notes arranged by her niece, Mere sweepings from a poet's workroom, yet how precious! Such an extraordinary power in the suggestion of words, as Mrs. Stotesbury said of the Rev. Billy Sunday!

She sent these lines with a dead humbly to her nephew, a child in kindergarten:

THE HUMBLEBEE'S RELIGION.

His little beehive figure
Unto itself a diva,
To a delusive iliac
The vanity divine
Of industry and morals
And every righteous thing
For the divine perdition
Of idleness and spring.

"All liars shall have their part."
JONATHAN EDWARDS.
"And let him that is atheist come!"
JESUS.

"She furthered our childish love of mystery and innocent intrigue," to continue, quoting the *Atlantic*, "on every occasion. With a box of maple sugar plums for us from the family supply, she sent these laconic instructions, 'Omit to return box. Omit to kiss you received box. Brooks of Sheffield.'"

"Again, under the same piratical circumstances, how inspiring to the clandestine mind those words of Scripture, 'We thank thee, Lord, that thou hast hid these things.'"

After reading even so short a quotation it would seem that almost any one would be sufficiently liberated mentally by these brilliant trifles sent to children to appreciate abstract thought. It is not worth the trouble of refutation. Many a time the present writer, when whom no greater Hearn enthusiast lives, has been shocked almost to death in reading over the most worn volume of the letters at the daring flights of this dreamer, a realist combined, who was willing to face any kind of thought or any phase of life, present or past.

The shock was chiefly pleasure, however, for, as he said to himself, "That bad boy Lafcadio should be spanked," paraphrasing the celebrated remark of Thackeray's concerning the Rev. Laurence Sterne, he smiled; for no one really could be angry long at Lafcadio the letter writer. Besides as the nimble wit plunged into fresh matter upon the following page he was just as likely as not to exclaim amazedly, "What a gentleman!" for in fact nobility is always the concluding impression left upon you by this artist.

Great names are better than argument. It is sad to think that all of them date from some time back in our history. It is sad to think that present day conditions do not call for successors to them. Pascin himself is but an individual. To crush him utterly would be impossible, even should we take that whim, for he is already accepted abroad. "If he who excludes, excludes himself," if we refuse to know him we are simply denying ourselves some very good art. By accepting all the good art we can get we shall increase our consciousness of life and so he himself is not inclined to produce more. Emily Dickinson and great artists of all kinds.

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"By a set of curious chances" the works of Edith Woodman Burroughs, the sculptor, are exhibited in conjunction with the works of Pascin in the Berlin Photographic Company. Oceans of ink will not have to be spilled for them in propitiation of the great American public opinion, for they have been accepted unreservedly this long time back.

Most of the sculptures shown have been seen before, but never to so much advantage, for they are excellently well presented in the gray gallery, and it is quite true, as the writer of the foreword to the catalogue says, that nothing is more instructing than the sight of an adequate number of an artist's production "grouped together in unusual surroundings, and in no other manner is it possible to determine with equal satisfaction the place which should be assigned to the artist."

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and as Americans really are fond of guessing, THE SUN's chronicler immediately guessed "B. B." to be Bryson Burroughs, the husband of the sculptor-exhibitor. It is admirable in style and truly a model of foreboding. A few quotations from it will give the cue to the exhibition.

It seems that Mrs. Burroughs began her art studies at the age of 15 at the Art Students League, "then established in a shabby and delightful old building on Twenty-third street," and studied drawing with Kenyon Cox, but "as her overpowering interest from her early years had been sculpture, she specialized with great enthusiasm in the modelling class of Augustus Saint Gaudens."

"The work of her girlhood was marked by sensitiveness, rare fancy and an ever springing invention which early distinguished her among her fellows. Her conceptions far outnumbered the possibilities of execution and her great delight at this time was the making of little projects for statues, fountains and groups."

The usual visit to Paris followed in course—two years of grind in the atelier. Then came a "wanderjahre" through the cathedral towns of northern France and into Italy.

The impetuosity spoken of as an early trait still holds true of the later sculptures. The quality is essentially impressionistic. A thousand viewpoints of an idea are not pondered over, weighed and moulded into a concrete instance. The thing is seen in a flash, seized and rushed hot into plaster and bronze.

The "Arabian Nights" pieces make one regret that Mrs. Burroughs has not been allowed to do more of such work. They are amusing and ought to look well in the open air. They show a thought for the Gothic principle in plan. Perhaps too much. After all the old schoolroom saying attributed to Michelangelo that "One should be able to roll good sculpture down hill" has been overworked. It does to frighten art students into good behavior, but professionals should forget it.

Who on earth wants to roll good sculpture down hill? Had any one attempted to roll "David" down hill Michelangelo would have raised one of the greatest rows ever heard of in art circles. They say, erroneously, that the Venus de Milo got rolled down hill, but I happen to know better. The real secret of some of her misfortunes is that a highly sensitive and cultivated Greek amateur

at Toledo is allowed to exist for another hundred years, the bridge-lovers of that future date would be sure to find Mrs. Burroughs' painted account of its present state worth discussing. If the bridge should happen to be destroyed (perish the thought!), then the canvas becomes still more valuable.

This "Bridge of St. Martin" is one of her best. Other good ones are the "Olympion," "Karnak" and the "Colonial House" at Burlington, Vt.

Dr. Bashford Dean in his charmingly written and scholarly handbook for the Riggs collection of arms and armor, now open to the public in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, gives an interesting answer to the question that was heard more often than any other at the opening reception on Monday evening, and in fact is always heard when ancient armor is discussed by moderns; were they who wore armor smaller than the average man of today, and since it appears to be so heavy, were they stronger than the athletes of the present?

The armor in the Riggs collection is mounted with great care, and the elegance of the workmanship is not only brought out but the articulation of the various pieces one upon the other is made so apparent and plausible that all visitors of the male persuasion who are at all afflicted with the demon of imagination and curiosity feel the irresistible desire to try one of these suits of plate armor on. But in the search for a fit it invariably strikes the average modern man that he must have swollen beyond the proportions of his ancestors, for all the armor seems to be for smallish men.

"My conclusion is," writes Dr. Dean, "after measuring fifty or more harnesses that the average size of the man of middle or higher class—for few owned armor who were not fairly well-to-do—was smaller in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries than it is today. But the answer to this question is not a simple one. If the armor studied were all from a single country the problem would be easier. It is certainly unfair to generalize about the increased size of modern Englishmen from data concerning sixteenth century Spaniards."

"Then, too, as Lord Dillon, long time director of the Tower armories, points out, it is difficult to estimate the height of the man who wore the armor, since it is always fair to assume that the armor about the hips may have been worn higher or lower, and this would make possible a margin of error of several inches if we attempt to estimate the height of a person from the measurements of his armor."

"Let us grant that the wearer of ancient armor was a smaller man, lean and active; was he proportionately stronger than a young officer today? This again is a question which cannot be answered precisely."

"We believe that he would do in his armor what few modern athletes could without special training. And we are convinced that he stood the strain longer and under greater mental and physical stress, but only on account of his experience."

"It is clear from statistics, at least as far back as statistics take us, that modern muscular effort, not to consider mental, is on the average the stronger. The revival of international athletic games has brought out clearly that the modern prize man breaks earlier records, even in throwing the discus or casting a javelin. Still, it would be interesting to see if today the average officer, English, Spanish or German, could vault over his charger if he were weighed down with armor."

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ART NEWS AND COMMENT.

ONE of our Paris correspondents wrote some time ago that it was proposed to organize a "Salon des Mobilites" to expose works of art by painters and sculptors now with the colors, the proceeds from admissions and sales to go toward the relief of destitute dependents of mobilized artists.

President Antonin Merlier of the Society of French Artists has announced that the society will not undertake anything by way of an exposition until long after the war is over. This society has more than 1,400 members with the colors; 650 painters, 382 sculptors, 206 engravers and 187 architects being now at the front.

It is said that none of the other salons will be held. Radical painters

of long ago, feeling that their arms were badly modelled, knocked them off. I have always felt myself that he only half did the work. He should have clipped off the head too. Lovely as it is, it is quite out of key with the wonderful torso.

Anna Richards Brewster, whose paintings are on exhibition in the Arlington Galleries until February 13, will probably be interested to know that she is a good academician. Had academicians merely go through the form of painting but say nothing at all, Mrs. Brewster, upon the other hand, counts very accurately the pleasure and instruction she got from some rather extensive travels.

She has been all through Greece and Montenegro, through Spain, Switzerland, Norway, Italy and old Egypt. She painted everywhere, drawing well and coloring her pictures well, and if she did not feel constrained to put her impressions into a poetical cast, at least she took the pains to seek out subjects that have a perpetual world interest. There is a valuable hint here for those who are academicians "upon their own recognizances." If they will not, sing as they work, like poets, then they must work at recording those typical facts that have perennial interest.

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"Acquiescence," by Edith Woodman Burroughs.

At the Berlin Photographic Company.

"Admiration for the severer schools was a general tendency at that date and has since blossomed out into the most characteristic quality of present day art—that desire of the *Puvis de Chavannes* remains the great exponent) to secure simplified, easily grasped form and expression in place of the uneasiness and complication usual during the late nineteenth century. The measure of the evolution which was taking place was revealed in the most worthy of the trouble of refutation. Many a time the present writer, when whom no greater Hearn enthusiast lives, has been shocked almost to death in reading over the most worn volume of the letters at the daring flights of this dreamer, a realist combined, who was willing to face any kind of thought or any phase of life, present or past.

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